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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: GAMBARI SEEKS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT ON BURMA

REF: A. NEW DELHI 3318

[B](#). JAKARTA 2211

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#). (C) UN Envoy to Burma Ibrahim Gambari conducted three trips in July and August to build international support for pressure on the Burmese regime. Gambari sought to create consensus in support of his good offices mandate that he can exploit to obtain results on his next trip to Burma, tentatively scheduled for early October. Gambari sought assurances from countries with influence -- China, Russia, India and Japan -- that they will urge the regime to respond to international concern. He also consulted with likeminded capitals in Europe about how to most effectively press for change. Finally, he traveled to ASEAN countries to explore bilateral and ASEAN initiatives. Gambari and his special assistant Erwan Pouchous told USUN they found widespread support for Gambari's mandate but fear governments unwilling to pressure the regime may hide behind the UN effort. In an August 2 meeting with Gambari, Amb Sanders urged him to use care in characterizing any "progress" by the regime and to keep his eye on concrete actions. USUN is seeking to arrange a private briefing to the Security Council by Gambari on his travel upon his return from vacation the week of September 4.

[2](#). (C) In May 2007, UN SYG Ban appointed Ibrahim Gambari to the position of special adviser on Burma. In his former capacity as Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Gambari had traveled to Burma twice. Over the course of the summer in his new role, Gambari conducted three trips abroad. He traveled the week of July 9 to Beijing, New Delhi, and Tokyo; the week of July 23 to Moscow, London, Paris, Brussels and Geneva; and the week of August 6 to Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore. Gambari explained to his interlocutors that he sought positive Burmese action on the concerns of the international community, including release of political prisoners, progress on human rights, inclusive reform of the political process, and expansion of humanitarian assistance.

Capitals with Influence

[3](#). (C) In discussions with USUN, Gambari and his special assistant Erwan Pouchous explained that the purpose of the trips was to create international consensus for Gambari's mandate, and to use this support to press the Burmese regime for action, particularly on democratic reform. Gambari reported that the Chinese and Russians made clear anew that they do not consider Burma a subject for Security Council action, but that they also agreed to use their influence with the regime to obtain movement. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov told Gambari that he would direct the Russian envoy engaged in nuclear talks with Burma to press the regime to

respond to Gambari's requests. In China, Gambari met with Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Binuggo and Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai, who promised him they would approach the Burmese and make clear that China supported Gambari's efforts and expected concrete results by the time of his next visit. Gambari also met with Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, who expressed general support for the good offices mandate. Pouchous described his meetings in Japan as warm but unspecific.

Likeminded Capitals

¶4. (C) In his trip to Europe, Gambari found a receptive audience at the EU and in the British and French Foreign Ministries. In the wake of Sarkozy's election, he judged the French to be more forthcoming in support of action on Burma, and he found both London and Paris interested in a renewed push for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. The British told him they are considering appointing departing UN official and UK national Michael Williams to be a special envoy on Burma (in addition to his new duties as UK Middle East envoy). While in Geneva, he consulted with the ILO and ICRC, although noted the sensitivity of advocating on behalf of the ICRC as a non-UN body.

ASEAN Capitals

¶5. (C) Gambari was pleased with his consultations in ASEAN capitals, where he found sympathy for his mandate. Pouchous advised USUN that officials in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur conveyed frustration with their respective bilateral efforts. They admitted to Gambari that the Burmese had not met their

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expectations. Pouchous expressed concern that the current ASEAN internal focus -- on integration of its charter and the establishment of a human rights body -- might lead the organization to avoid pushing actively on the Burmese at this time. He also noted that the practice of consensus in ASEAN limited the organization's impact.

Next Steps

¶6. (C) Amb Sanders met with Gambari August 2, prior to his trip to ASEAN capitals. She urged him to be more prudent in public characterizations of the regime, noting that the "trial period" with the ILO and the visit by the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict are too preliminary to be considered progress. Gambari took the message, but said he was also conscious of the need to engage the regime and create incentives as well as pressure for action.

¶7. (C) Gambari also reported that he had received a message through a reliable source from Aung San Suu Kyi, who reported that she had recently been able to receive medical and dental care. She warned Gambari that the regime might try to take advantage of the timing of his next visit to suggest UN approval for the constitutional convention. To avoid this linkage, Gambari said he would likely travel to Burma following the UNGA General Debate (September 25-October 3). Gambari also said he looked forward to consultations in Washington prior to his next trip to Burma. Separately, Pouchous told USUN that Gambari is considering forming a contact group in New York on Burma, to include the P-5, India, Japan, Thailand, and the EU and ASEAN chairs. The challenge, Pouchous commented, would be keeping the grouping reasonably limited in size so it could serve a useful function. Pouchous also made clear that Gambari is conscious that some states may well try and hide behind the UN effort to avoid direct pressure on the regime.

¶8. (C) USUN is seeking to arrange a private briefing by

Gambari to the Security Council to report on his trips during the first week of September (when he returns from leave). Following his next trip to Burma, USUN can pursue arranging a formal meeting of the Council.

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